

156 *Reviews*

Desire for Race, by Sarah Daynes and Orville Lee. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 242pp. \$ 31.99 paper. ISBN: 9780521680479.

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Is race real? The authors of *Desire for Race* claim it is not. Confronting the social constructivist mantra that race is real because it is real in its consequences, Sarah Daynes and Orville Lee contend that race "is neither real in nature nor in society." Rather, they argue, race exists purely as "a thing of belief." Daynes and Lee do not deny the existence of *racial experiences*—the real life consequences of the *belief* in race—but they reject the common claim that such experiences testify to the existence of a "racial object that can be treated as a theoretical concept" (p. 7). Building from this provocative premise, *Desire for Race* seeks to understand the conditions for the persistence of the belief in race over time, despite its evident "falseness," and despite several decades' worth of constructivist scholarship that has sought to undermine it.

The book's argument is presented in two stages. First, the authors build the case for a new conceptualization of the object of inquiry in this field. In chapters on the concept of race in American sociology, Marxism, British social anthropology, and British cultural studies, the authors examine the approach to analysis of race in the work of several influential thinkers. These chapters cover much familiar ground, but with a critical edge; any of these individual chapters would stand alone nicely as supplementary reading in a graduate race theory course. Based on this survey, Daynes and Lee conclude that "there has been up to this point a confusion between two objects of inquiry: 'race' and the 'belief in race'" (p. 120). As a consequence of this confusion, they argue, even the most stridently constructivist theories of race have retained kernels of essentialism.

The suggestion that all previous work has ultimately conflated "race" and "the belief in race" is perhaps overstated—especially

in light of their own discussion of Durkheim, Weber, and contemporary writers like Peter Wade. But Daynes and Lee go further than other theorists in making this analytical distinction *central* to their conceptualization of the nature of race as a social phenomenon. This is a critical analytical move because it facilitates a clean epistemological break between theoretical and commonsense conceptions of race, a break they see as mandatory to avoid scholarly essentialism.

Daynes and Lee propose a new approach to research and theory on "race." They argue that scholars of race are not dealing with one object ("race"), but with four distinct objects of inquiry: "the phenotype, the perception of phenotype, racial ideas, and racial practice" (p. 137). By clearly distinguishing these four objects, and focusing analysis on the relationships between them (which they term "the racial ensemble"), the authors believe that scholars can break with the inadvertent essentialism that so often blemishes otherwise rigorous research in this area.

Of the four objects in this "racial ensemble," Daynes and Lee see *racial ideas* as primary. With racial ideas in play, the four elements of the ensemble work together to naturalize and reproduce social relationships of domination that seem to be rooted in nature. Without racial ideas, however, the other three elements of the ensemble cease to be racial at all. Absent the belief in race, race could not exist as a social fact. Thus, Daynes and Lee arrive at their core argument: theories of race ought to be centrally concerned with understanding the conditions for the production and reproduction of *belief in race*.

Race is a belief, the authors insist, but this does not mean it is "purely ideational or discursive" nor that it is merely a post-structuralist "text." Threading a fine line between existing ideational understandings of race, Daynes and Lee state that what differentiates their understanding of race-as-an-idea is their explicit recognition that it is an idea firmly rooted to "something in the world." Racial ideas have a concrete referent in the sphere of nature; they attend to phenotype. Nature, they write, is a "necessary limit condition on belief." But the reader remains unclear how rigorously this rule is to be interpreted. What of cases where physical

referents are absent or ignored? Does the idea of race always hinge on an objective referent in nature?

With belief in race defined as the principal object of inquiry, the second part of the book turns to the question of how to explain the production and persistence of race as belief. Here the authors draw creatively from conceptual resources developed in the sociology of religion and the sociology of collective memory to theorize race as a "process of believing." More controversially, the authors also turn to Freudian psychoanalysis for tools to understand the affective dimension of racial belief. Where other scholars have drawn on cognitive social psychology or theories of embodiment and habitus to gain leverage on the "unconscious dimension of meaningful action," Daynes and Lee look to the concept of *libido* (desire) to understand the "attachment" to racial beliefs. The foray into psychoanalytic explanations for the perpetuation of racial ideas will likely be met with skepticism by many sociologists—as the authors readily admit (p. 212). But any such skepticism about this particular direction for future sociological research on race should not detract from the larger contributions of this work.

Desire for Race is a serious, innovative, thought-provoking contribution to social scientific theory of race. In an area of the discipline that is never short on controversy, but where the controversies are often over-rehearsed and under-thought, Daynes and Lee have written an insightful, challenging, and unconventionally controversial book. Few, if any, readers will agree with every argument advanced in *Desire for Race*, but the authors present important future challenges for scholars of race: to confront their part in the reproduction of the belief in race; to question the complacency of constructivist truisms; to define the object of inquiry in studies of race with precision and consistency; and to broaden our theoretical horizons, drawing creatively from a much larger arsenal of conceptual resources in our efforts to theorize race and understand its implications for everyday life.

Struggles Before Brown: Early Civil Rights Protests and Their Significance Today, by Jean Van Delinder. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008. 197pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9781594514593.

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There are golden nuggets in *Struggles Before Brown: Early Civil Rights Protests and Their Significance Today*. They yearn to shine through the formidable flaws of this book. I will highlight the contributions of this work and lay bare the faults that could have been avoided.

Jean Van Delinder illuminates a number of important and often overlooked aspects of the civil rights movements. Through interviews, archival research, and secondary sources, she developed a conceptual framework to analyze civil rights struggles that occurred in Kansas and Oklahoma before the 1954 Supreme Court Ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. This "Border Campaign" framework argues that to understand social movements, analyses must take into consideration local determinants, indirect cautious protests that unfold behind the scenes, value rational agency of individuals functioning outside existing organizations and leadership, and the gendered nature of movements.

Delinder makes a persuasive case regarding local determinants. She argues that the early civil rights protests in Kansas and Oklahoma contrasted sharply with those in the Deep South that usually serve as the empirical base for civil rights studies. In these two border states, the color line was often fluid, ambiguous, and contradictory; in some instances, racial segregation was enforced while integration was permitted in others. Thus, the type of regime plays an important role in structuring protests aimed against it. Because oppression was not as direct and brutal in Kansas and Oklahoma, blacks prior to the *Brown* case often did not seek to overthrow segregation but to make